

FILING
CABINET
1

AMES FAMILY

INDIANA HISTORY

INTIMATE PICTURES OF LIFE OF PIONEERS

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

AMES FAMILY

INDIANA HISTORY

INTIMATE PICTURES OF LIFE OF THE PIONEERS

The Northwest more than one hundred years ago.

Story written for family.

The following sketch, written solely for family reading, presents some interesting pictures of pioneer life in the northwestern territory. The writer of the sketch is a granddaughter of the "Grandpa and Grandma Ames" referred to and they were the parents of Bishop Edward R. Ames, formerly a resident of Indianapolis. Belpre, where they first settled on coming west, is on the Ohio river, near Marietta. Ames township and Amesville were named for "Grandpa Ames"

The Rev. Daniel Johnson mentioned was a chaplain in the revolutionary army and was with Washington at Valley Forge. The Judge Cutler referred to was Ephraim Cutler, son of Manasseh Cutler, framer of the celebrated ordinance of 1787 and himself one of the founders of Ohio. The Mr. Ewing, mentioned as a neighbor of the Ameses, was the father of Thomas Ewing, afterward a great lawyer and secretary of the treasury under President William Henry Harrison and secretary of the interior under President Taylor.

"Grandpa and Grandma Ames came to the Northwestern territory in 1798 and settled temporarily in Belpre. There was no house for them except the schoolhouse. The people were willing to rent that for a time but said they had promised to let the young people have a singing school there every Thursday evening. Grandma did not mind that. She was quite willing to have the young people around her. So they moved into the schoolhouse and every Thursday evening the supper dishes were cleared away and the room made ready for the singing school.

They had brought but little furniture with them and had no table. A large white pine chest, in which some of their goods had been packed, served for a table and as grandma knew how to make the best of what she had, she sometimes invited company and they had a merry time, seated around the white pine chest. Once when she wanted to have a little company, she thought at first that she must give it up, because she had no flour to make a cake and it was no small matter at that time to get flour when it was needed. But she concluded to make a pound cake of corn meal instead of flour, though she felt a little uncertain as to the result. Of course she said nothing about it to the company and after the supper was over one of the ladies spoke of the cake and asked grandma for the receipt, she thought it was so nice. Then grandma told her what she had done and they thought it a fine joke.

THE BLACK WALNUT STAIRCASE

This schoolhouse had a 'loft' where kindlings had been kept and grandma could make some use of it, but the stairs were rather rough, being simply a black walnut log leaned from the floor of the house up through a large square hole of the floor of the loft, having notches cut in the log for steps. When grandpa and grandma wrote back to their friends in Massachusetts telling them how they were situated, they said, "Our house has a solid black walnut staircase". They laughed as they wrote it, as black walnut was at that time very expensive wood in New England and it sounded very fine.

While they were living in Belpre a lady came from New England and she was wearing a black rosette. She said all the ladies in New England wore them since the death of General Washington, which had occurred some weeks before. She brought some rosettes with her, which she gave or sold to the ladies in Belpre and they all wore them. One day a lady was visiting grandma and as they were talking of New England churches, pastors, etc.

the lady said. "The finest installation service I ever saw was in Cambridge, Mass., when the Rev. Daniel Johnson was installed". Grandma could hardly speak for a moment and then she said, "Why that was my father! He was just married then, and was only twenty-one years old when he was installed. This made grandma's visitor seem like an old acquaintance and they became good friends though grandma was much the younger of the two.

Grandma and grandpa decided to make their new western home in what is now Ames township on Federal creek. And in 1800—in May, I believe they moved to that place. They had now two little children—Hector, born before they left Massachusetts and Eliza, born on the 4th of March, 1800, in Belpre. There were no roads through the country and grandpa was obliged to take what little furniture and other goods they had to the mouth of the Hocking, where they were put into a small boat called a piroque—made of the bark of a tree— and rowed up the river until they reached the mouth of Federal creek, then up that creek until they reached their landing place.

GOODS DAMAGED BY WATER

This was not far from Judge Cutler's farm, and he and his family glad to have a new family settle near them, gave them a warm welcome and invited them to come right to their house and stay until a cabin could be built. This they were very glad to do and their goods were taken from the little boat and left in a safe place (as they supposed) a short distance from the bank of the creek. In the night a storm arose and they heard the rain and were glad to feel themselves safe in the house of a friend and to think their goods were not in danger. But in the morning when grandpa and Judge Cutler went down to see about the goods they found that there had been a sudden and wonderful rise in the creek, such as those who settled near it saw many times in later

years and the water had even reached the spot where the goods had been left and some things had been carried quite a distance down the creek, a few were destroyed and others more or less injured. This was sad news to carry back to the house, but these young people who had come from New England to make a home in the wilderness were not easily discouraged so they made haste to save as much as possible. One thing, altogether destroyed, was their sugar-nearly half a barrel of it. This was a great loss as there was no sugar to be had nearer than Marietta and it must be brought from there in small quantities on horseback. The few neighbors, some from a distance of several miles, now came, with willing hearts and hands, to assist in putting up the cabin. The trees were to be cut down, the logs prepared and the cabin built, but this did not take many days and as there was no plastering to be done and no woodwork to be finished, it was soon ready to live in. It had one large room which was parlor, dining room and kitchen all in one, with two little bedrooms partitioned off at one end and a "loft" where some things might be kept.

EVERYTHING WAS STRANGE

Well, now the new life was fairly begun and everything seemed very strange to grandma, who had lived in Salem, Marblehead, Newburyport and Boston, with her aunts or her grandmother- her mother having died when she was ten years old. Her friends were all wealthy. Slaves were kept in Massachusetts when she was a little girl and she had been carefully and tenderly raised and now she felt very timid whenever grandpa was out of sight, as their nearest neighbor, Judge Cutler, lived a quarter of a mile away. Indians were often seen and she was always afraid of them, though they seemed to be friendly. There were some bears in the woods and the wolves often came near to the house,

and their howling always sounded very terrible to her. But she always tried to be very brave and cheerful and perhaps no one knew, until she told many years after, how she suffered from fear during those first years when her children were little and she felt so helpless.

One morning, soon after they moved into their cabin, grandma was getting the breakfast and grandpa had gone to a distant neighbors on an errand when she saw some cattle not very far from the house. She knew so little of country life that she did not know but they might come to the house and attack her and the children, so she left her breakfast and climbed up the ladder with the children into the loft. But even here she did not feel safe, so she climbed down and wrapped the baby Eliza in a blanket and took little Hector by the hand and went over to Judge Cutler's. following the creek, because she had not yet learned the way through the woods, which afterward became so familiar to her. This made the walk a long one for her and the little child, but they reached the house in safety and when she told Mrs. Cutler why she came, Mrs. Cutler told her those were Mr. Ewing's cattle and she need never be afraid of cattle, they were perfectly harmless. Then they could laugh together over the whole affair, and Mrs. Cutler told grandma to stay there to breakfast and then she would let her Charles and Polly go home with her and drive the cattle away.

HAD VERY PRETTY CLOTHES

Grandma had some very pretty clothes when she came from Massachusetts. There was a cloak of plume colored satin, it was called 'double satin', and was very heavy, lined with fine white flannel. It was a full circle, trimmed around with curled ermine. It had a large hood that grandma said could be drawn up over her bonnet when she went sleigh riding in New England, She had also a dove-colored silk dress called a 'tabby-silk' so heavy and rich it would almost stand alone

and another a 'snuff colored' silk. These dresses were made with trains and were not very suitable to wear in a log cabin, but for several years once in a great while grandma wore them. These things were brought from England by her grandfather, who owned several trading vessels. The cloak was made in England, but the dresses she made herself for grandma could do anything with her needle that any other lady could do and it was well that she had learned this.

After the country was a little more settled and Ohio was made a state, grandpa Ames became quite a prominent man. The first time he was elected to the legislature, he could not afford to buy a new coat to wear and his best coat was a little threadbare. So grandma ripped every stitch of it even the buttonholes sponged and pressed each piece and put it together again and the other side out and it looked like a new coat.

Once when there was just the beginning of a town where Athens now is, grandpa went there on some business and it was a little late when he was ready to start back to his home. There was no road and it grew so dark that he could no longer see the trees which had been 'blazed' to mark the way. He went on as well as he could until he thought he ought to be near home but he had become so confused that he could not tell which way to go and could not find a 'blazed tree, so he concluded he must sleep in the woods, where he was and wait for daylight. He tied his horse to a tree and lay down on the ground with his saddle for a pillow and slept soundly. When he awoke in the morning he found he was only a few rods from his own door.

MANY CHILDREN DIED.

The summer of 1806 was a very sickly season and several children in the neighborhood died. Grandma had six children-Hector, Eliza, Lucy, Daniel, Marcia and Edward. Edward was born in May and in June Daniel

died and Marcia in July. The sickness was like dysentery and was considered contagious and the people were afraid to go where the children were sick and there was no doctor nearer than Athens-twelve miles away. This was a very sad time for grandma and grandpa. It was very hot and dry and nothing would grow and the little streams were all dry. There was a fine spring of water that came out from under a large rock at the foot of a high hill at quite a distance from the house and this was where the water was brought from for drinking and cooking during that summer. Hector and Eliza usually went together for water, each carrying a small jug. Lucy who was then five years old, was allowed to go with them once, and now when she is eighty-seven years old, remembers what a treat it was to her and especially how cool and delightful the water felt to their little bare feet as they waded the creek, just before they came to the spring. A little later grandpa dug a well not far from the house.- they called it a well, although it was not walled up, but was large, more like a cistern and a board was laid across it, on which they walked out a little way and then stooped over and dipped up the water. One day a neighbor returning something that had been borrowed, brought it in a little ~~two~~ quart pail, which was left on the table. It looked so pretty to Lucy that she wished very much to go to the well for water with Hector and carry that little pail. So he left her go and when he had filled his pail he turned away and she walked out on the board and dipped up some water, but it was too heavy for her, small as the little pail was, and as soon as it filled she lost her balance and went to the bottom of the well. Hector heard the splash and ran back without waiting to call for help, ~~went~~ out on the board and when she arose to the surface caught hold of her clothes and dragged her out. She remembers walking up to the house with the water dripping

from her clothes as she went. Grandpa and grandma were very much frightened and they thought Hector a wonderful boy.

SOME HAPPY EVENINGS

Grandpa's and Judge Cutler's families were always very good friends and used to have many pleasant visits together. Sometimes Judge and Mrs. Cutler would come over to grandpa's to spend the evening. Mrs. Cutler would bring her work and she and grandma would sit and sew by the light of one candle, until after nine o'clock. Then grandma would lay down her sewing and go and make a cup of tea, bake biscuits and get a nice supper and they would have a merry time around the table after which the ladies sat down and sewed again until 10 or 11 o'clock. After the company went home grandma would wash the dishes and have the room all ready for morning.

There were very few books and papers then and anything to read was counted very precious. The new almanac at the beginning of each year always gave them one good evening's reading. Grandpa took the National Intelligencer published at Washington and that came every week, but the mails were carried on horseback and the paper was a week old or more when it reached them. This was always read aloud in the family and nothing in it was omitted. This paper was always carefully preserved. There were no postoffices in that part of the state then. The mail carrier deposited the papers for the scattered inhabitants in boxes nailed to trees for that purpose. The box where grandpa's paper was left was about three miles from the house and once a week some one was sent down to get the paper. Lucy remembers going, when she could not have been more than ten years old, when she rode on an old gentle horse and carried little Marcia, a second little girl named Marcia, in her lap. Marcia was less than a year old and was not very strong and grandma thought riding was good for her, so the two children rode about on this old horse.

CHILDREN LIKED TO GO TO SCHOOL

When there was a school in the neighborhood grandma always sent as many of her children as she could and this was one of their greatest pleasures. But she was often obliged to keep Eliza or Lucy at home a day to help her and when this happened, it always caused a discussion between the two little girls as they both wanted to go to school. One morning grandma told them she wanted one of them to stay with her that day and they each wanted to go to school as usual. But before it was time to go Eliza announced that she was willing to stay at home. Lucy did not quite understand why Eliza had changed her mind so suddenly and wondered if there was some secret about it until Hector whispered to her when they were alone and said: "Never mind, Lucy, I heard ma tell Eliza she was going over to Mrs Cutler's this afternoon and the one that stayed at home should go with her.....
.....;out we will go home with Mrs. Cutler's children. So they started carrying their dinners, as they always did and after school they went to Mrs. Cutler's as they had planned and so surprised their mother and Eliza, but grandma did not scold them. She let them have a good time and then they all went home together.

Once when Lucy was a little girl, she was sent over to Mrs. Cutler's on an errand and when she came home she told grandma she saw such a big black dog when she was coming through the woods. She said he came out of the woods on one side and walked along just as softly crossing the path a little in front of her and went off into the woods on the other side. But she was not much afraid. She guessed he did not see her, for he walked with his nose close down to the ground. When she had finished her story grandma knew that the child had seen and had been very near to a bear. Bears were so scarce in the woods by that time that Lucy had never seen one before, but she

had often heard the wolves howl when she happened to be awake in the night and had often seen them quite near the house. Plenty of deer were to be seen in the woods when Lucy was quite a grown-up girl. She remembers standing in the door of their house one day and seeing six fine large deer come down the hill a short distance from the house and leap over the fence one after another into the wheat field to eat the green wheat. She says it was a beautiful sight.

THE CALL TO ARMS

At one time during the war of 1812 a fort somewhere in the northern part of the state was besieged and a call was sent out for men to come and assist in raising the siege. This call aroused the men in the neighborhood where grandpa lived and some of them decided to go. It was very hard for grandpa to leave grandma with the care of the farm and the children, the oldest being only about fourteen years old, but he felt that he ought to go and so prepared to start with the others. Braver and more experienced women than grandma trembled at the thought of being left alone, but they knew the men were doing right to go.

The first night after grandpa started grandma fastened the door of the little cabin and put the children to bed, but she could not sleep herself. There were so many things to fear. She knew grandpa was to be exposed to all the dangers of war and this alone was enough to drive away all thought of sleep. She heard the wolves howling, & that was always a lonesome sound, though she had learned by this time not to be afraid of them. But her fear of the Indians was far greater than the fear of any wild animals. She never felt that they were to be trusted, even when they professed to be friendly. In other places they

had murdered whole families and now when they knew how helpless these families were, she felt sure they would come and attack them. She was glad when the morning came, but all day she was dreading the coming of another night. As soon as it began to grow dark, she fastened the doors as securely as she could and gathered the children around her, trying to make the little room bright, to keep up her own courage and make the children happy.

"Later in the evening she heard the noise of letting down the bars leading from the road into the yard. Then she heard a horse tramping along toward the house, but not the sound of any voice, and as the horse came close to the door, she was ready to faint, and was so frightened that it was a moment before she recognized grandpa's voice when he spoke to her, for it was grandpa. Oh, she was so happy as she opened the door and he came in. This was the story he told. He, with his neighbors and ----- who had joined them, traveled nearly all of the first day and were not far from Columbus when they received the news that the seige was raised, the danger was over and they could return to their homes. There was great rejoicing now, and as Grandpa ate his supper he related all of his experiences during those long two days, and Grandma could speak lightly now of all her fears and the imagined dangers which had seemed so very real to her only a few hours before. Grandpa used, afterward, to laugh about the time he went to the war', but, he said, 'the enemy heard I was coming and they all ran away.'

CALICO WAS A LUXURY

"During all these years while grandpa and grandma lived on the farm, material for clothing and everything to be used about the house

cost a great deal more than they do now, and quite a journey must be taken to get them. When salt was wanted, a boy must be sent on horse-back away over to the Scioto salt works somewhere near Chillicothe. Then salt was put into a bag, thrown across the horse's back, and so carried home. This journey, going and coming, would occupy three or four days, and the salt was so dark and coarse we would not consider it fit for any kind of use now. The 'bitter water' dripped from the bag all the way home. When the salt was put into the barrel, the 'bitter water' oozed out, so the outside of the barrel was always wet. When the salt was to be used for salting butter it must first be rinsed in two or three waters- the first water looked very yellow, like muddy water.

"Grandma and her daughters needed nothing finer than calico dresses, and Lucy remembers one calico dress that cost a dollar a yard. But the calico dress was fine and pretty, more like our chintz. Grandma made her dresses, as they made them in Massachusetts when she was married. They had sleeves tight down to the elbow and a ruffle falling from there- the skirt with a short train, also ruffled around. The fashions did not change often then, as they do now, or if they did change in New England, the ladies who lived in the woods of Ohio, did not find it out. Lucy says grandma looked like a queen, as she stepped about her cabin with one of the pretty dresses on.

"Lucy remembers one incident that occurred when she was little girl. Grandpa's brother Cyrus came from Belpre to visit him and one afternoon he proposed to grandpa they should ride up to Mr. Fuller's-about 3 miles distant. So they started and had not been gone more than an hour when grandma went into the bedroom for something, and there she saw two snakes. The room was very small and there was a space of only about a yard between

the foot of the bed and a chest that stood against the opposite wall. The bed clothes hung down to the floor all around-they did not tuck in as they do now- and in this little space she saw the snakes. She could not kill them and did not want to lose sight of them. So she sent the children out of doors, and she watched the snakes every moment , only stepping to the door often to see if she possibly might see someone passing who could come and kill them. She had only looked out a few times when she saw grandpa and his brother coming toward home.

KILLED THE SNAKES

"She was very glad to see help coming, and she called as loud as she could and motioned with her hands for they were still far away. As soon as she saw their horses begin to gallop, showing that the men understood her motions, she went back to watch her snakes. Then she met grandpa at the door and told him what had frightened her. He took the fire shovel, which was very large, with long handle, to correspond with the great old-fashioned fireplace in their cabin, and slipped into the bedroom, keeping close to the wall until he could get on the bed at the head and then crawled down to the foot of the bed and peeped over. The snakes seemed to be playing; sometimes their heads were up and sometimes down on the floor; grandpa waited until their heads were together on the floor and then set the shovel down suddenly on both of their necks and held it firmly until his brother came and they killed both of them. They were copperheads and quite large. They are never very long. After it was all over grandma asked grandpa if it was possible they had been up to Mr. Fuller's. He said, "No." He did not know exactly why they had not gone on, But as they were riding along he said to his brother: "If we go up to Fuller's and stay to supper, as they will want us to do , we shall not get home until after dark, and I

am afraid I ought not to be away.' So without any more words, they turned their horses and started home. He and grandma felt that he had been sent back home because they were in trouble at home.

"One summer when the second little Marcia was less than a year old, she was not well, and Lucy used to take care of her a great deal. It was good for the baby Marcia to be out of doors, so in the morning grandpa would put his saddle - there was no side saddle - on old Cuff, the old gentle horse; then he would put Lucy on the horse - Lucy was then ten years old - with the baby on her lap and Edward, five years old at that time, behind her - and so the three children spent many long days wandering about in the woods, never very far from the house. Sometimes, when the little ones grew restless, Lucy would ride up to an old stump or log, and manage in some way to get them and herself down on the ground, where they would pick flowers and rest awhile. Then she would climb up on the horse and get the children up, and they would ride about again. Grandma used to wonder how Lucy managed so well, but she felt safe about them, for Lucy was a careful child.

NO CHURCHES NEAR

"There was no meeting house within thirty or forty miles of the place where grandpa lived, and it was only once in a long time that a traveling preacher came and preached in one of the cabins, and the neighbors would gather from far and near to hear him. Grandma and grandpa did not want to become careless about the Sabbath, so they agreed that they would always put on their 'Sunday Clothes' when the day came, that the children might see the difference, and that they would do no unnecessary work on that day. But as their life was rather monotonous, they were sometimes in danger of losing the day of the week. One morning grandma

got up, thinking it was Saturday, and after finishing her morning work she sat down to mend a pair of trousers before Sunday. A neighbor came in, but as some of the women did sew on Sunday, she did not think it very strange, and said nothing about it. When Grandpa had finished his 'chores' he came in and found grandma sewing and knew she had made a mistake. He said, 'My dear, if that sewing must be done today would it not be better to take it into another room out of sight?' Grandma said, 'Why shouldn't I sit here with my sewing today?' Then he told her it was Sunday. They both laughed, and she put away her sewing and prepared to keep the day as usual.

"There were but few books for the children in those early days. Lucy remembers only two that she had when only a child. One of these grandpa bought for her once when he went to Marietta. It had a shiny green cover and was called 'The Happy Family'. She remembers how very lovely that book looked and she read it and read it over and over. The other was only a little paper covered primer called 'The Story of a Shipwreck'. This was a child's book only because it was small. The story was in language that no child could understand. But Lucy remembers how she loved that little book because it was given to her in a very pleasant way. A young couple-Mr. and Mrs. Poole-came from New England to settle in the neighborhood, and stopped at grandma's and grandpa's and asked if they could stay there until a cabin could be built. Of course, they could stay, for grandpa and grandma had not forgotten the time when they came as strangers and were taken into the home of Judge Cutler & treated as friends. Mr. Poole was a rather common man in appearance and manner, but Mrs. Poole was a bright, cheerful little lady, who made herself very pleasant, and grandma and the children loved her very much.

With the help of the neighbors a cabin was soon built and another home was started in the woods. When Mrs. Poole was going away from grandmas she gave Lucy this little primer, and said she had bought several little things before leaving New England, and brought them with her to give to children in the homes where she knew they would sometimes ask to stay. It was a great thing for a child to receive a present of any kind, and the fact of Mrs. Poole having supplied herself with these showed how kind and thoughtful a person she was."

Indianapolis News

June, 1910